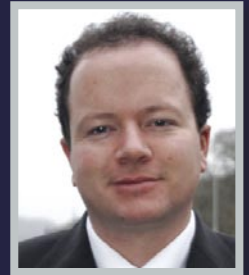


Money saving tips!

Always useful at Christmas

John Gleeson
Director, iThink Technology
Email: info@ithink.ie



Below I have listed just some of the ways you can save money through technology:

1. OFFICE PHONE SYSTEM:

Almost everyone at this stage has heard of Voice Over IP (VOIP). This technology allows voice to be sent efficiently over data networks using the same technology (Internet Protocol) as that used on the web. Whether it's for making cheap international calls or just for contacting remote offices sending your voice calls over the data network can offer significant cost savings. You can access services such as Skype (www.skype.com) which allows you to make call from your PC or you can purchase a USB phone which attaches to your PC and acts like a regular phone. Blueface (www.blueface.ie) is an Irish company who provides VOIP services through a traditional handset rather than a PC headset or softphone on your PC. It offers a range of packages such as 1,000 minutes to Ireland and UK destinations for €20 a month. The added advantage of using a VOIP system such as Blueface is there is no longer a need for an expensive office PBX or a yearly maintenance fee to fix it when it goes wrong. Instead all this equipment is maintained and stored remotely by the supplier such as Blueface and you have a web interface to make the necessary changes to it as and when the need arises.

2. MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS:

Mobile phones have empowered us all to work more efficiently but for the bill payer there's always the worry that staff are going to rack up large mobile bills. You can add some certainty to your mobile bills if you purchase your minutes in bulk for the whole company. The two main business networks – Vodafone and o2 have bulk purchasing plans which enable you to purchase a set numbers of minutes every month which are then used on a first come first served basis by all your company mobiles. These packages

also include free calls to a designated phone number, which can be selected as the office number which ensures that all mobile staff calls to the office are free.

Another cost cutting feature which is rarely used within business is "web text". All the leading providers provide 300 free webtext per mobile phone. All that has to be done is that the number is registered via the providers website i.e. www.vodafone.ie Once this is completed 300 free texts can be sent to any Irish mobile number. This can be useful to send short brief messages to mobile staff free of charge!

3. STANDARDISE YOUR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE:

Have you still got a few Apple Macs lingering in your mainly Windows office environment? Or are you supporting different flavours of Windows PCs that need to be able to talk to each other? No matter what your preferred hardware or software platform it makes sound financial and operational sense to standardise or consolidate on a single platform. Consolidation is not just something big business can benefit from. It offers a number of benefits that can feed directly into your bottom line. Standardising hardware means you can reduce support costs and simplify the whole process as there is only one platform to support. Also with standardisation it is a lot easier to train and move staff between departments or offices.

4. ELECTRONIC MARKETING:

Are you still getting brochures printed and then sending them to prospective customers? Are you regularly stuck with hundreds of outdated copies that you have to dump or recycle? Most business are now more than happy to receive brochures, quotes and proposals by email, and the good news is that it's virtually free!

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to communicate with your customers is through an email newsletter. There are plenty of options when purchasing the software for designing and managing distribution of your e-newsletter such as Irish suppliers Equinox, Iflow-tech ad E-Search's Newsweaver.

5. REMOTE SUPPORT RATHER THAN CALL OUTS:

The availability of cheap fast broadband in most of the country doesn't just mean you can surf the web at high speeds. It also means a host of other services are available, not least the ability for support partners to offer you IT support as a managed service. Traditional IT support has been provided on a reactive basis, you have a problem they come out and fix the problem ad charge you accordingly. With a managed service your supplier commits to providing the service and charges you a fixed monthly or annual charge. In this scenario your service level agreement explicitly states the time frame a problem will be fixed within and also commits to a certain level of availability of the service. This service can also alert the service provide if a problem occurs automatically before it affects users, thereby eliminating the need to be logging calls. In the vast majority of cases they wont even have to come on site to solve the problem – they can dial in remotely and make the changes required. Contact iThink Technology or visit www.ithink.ie for more details or for a quote.

I would like to wish all our readers and all in "Sligo Business" a very happy Christmas and a Prosperous 2008

Should you require any further information or advice on any of the topics covered please do not hesitate to contact me at jgleeson@ithink.ie or at the numbers below



iTHINK TECHNOLOGY – YOUR COMPLETE IT BUSINESS PARTNER

iThink Technology provide IT solutions and services for small to medium size businesses. We specialise in IT Services from implementing new systems, upgrading existing systems, providing maintenance, to delivering end user and technical training. Our service is proactive – in other words we get paid to keep your systems up not to fix them when they are down.

CALL US FOR A FREE TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT AND LET US BUILD A CLEAR IT STRATEGY FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

T: 071 9666047 • M: 087 8111151 • E: INFO@ITHINK.IE • W: WWW.ITHINK.IE

